



Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development

HHS-2016-ACF-ACYF-CT-1178

Application Due Date: 06/13/2016

Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development

HHS-2016-ACF-ACYF-CT-1178

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**Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families**

Program Office: Administration on Children, Youth and Families - Children's Bureau

Funding Opportunity Title: Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: HHS-2016-ACF-ACYF-CT-1178

Primary CFDA Number: 93.648

Due Date for Applications: 06/13/2016

Executive Summary

Notices:

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire funding opportunity announcement (FOA) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants Page at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto>.

Staff turnover has high fiscal costs for child welfare agencies and even higher human costs for the children and families served by those agencies. Continuous staff turnover negatively affects safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families by impacting the timeliness, continuity and quality of services. The well-being of children and families requires a systematic, continuous process for recruiting, training, and retaining a high quality child welfare workforce as a critical mechanism for improving outcomes.

The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to establish by cooperative agreement one Quality Improvement Center (QIC). The QIC will conduct a multi-site demonstration project to address pervasive child welfare workforce challenges. The QIC will demonstrate whether specific strategies improve staff recruitment and retention in state and tribal systems and will assess the effect on system-involved children and families. This QIC will select or create and test innovative and promising workforce improvement strategies examining both utility and efficacy. The QIC will then engage in partnerships with public child welfare agencies to implement and rigorously evaluate the strategies using standardized measures and common outcomes to allow for comparisons across sites. Findings will be publicly disseminated.

Outcomes will include:

Evidence-based strategies and interventions that, when applied to identified workforce challenges, result in:

- Improved worker recruitment, retention rates, and worker satisfaction and intention to stay.
- Improved agency culture and climate that supports worker recruitment and retention.
- Improved child welfare practices related to safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.
- Workforce interventions that can be replicated in other child welfare systems.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

The legislative authority for this initiative is section 426 (a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 626(a)(1)).

Description

BACKGROUND

Building the child welfare workforce requires people with excellent skills doing high quality work, but high quality child welfare professionals will only stay in child welfare if the organizations they serve function well. The Children's Bureau (CB) applies a multipronged approach to building the capacity of the child welfare workforce. First, those providing front line services to children and families must be recruited, educated, trained, supported, and developed professionally in innovative ways. Second, agencies must improve their organizational cultures to retain their workforce and achieve better outcomes for children and families. CB supports healthy child welfare organizations that value people, implement best practices, provide evidence-based services and hospitable environments for effective interventions, and effectively collaborate with partner agencies to ensure that children and families are safe, healing, and thriving. Third, academic partners must include in their curriculum a wide array of knowledge and skills to prepare high quality child welfare professionals who promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families.

A comprehensive approach to improving the child welfare workforce should anticipate emerging needs and new realities and expectations. By identifying and studying trends, agencies can proactively adapt to the evolving needs of its workforce, children, and families. Therefore, the QIC will research and identify trends that are likely to have significant consequences for and impact on the future of the child welfare workforce. It will recommend proactive strategies for agencies to prepare for and address these trends.

In order to meet the requirements of the cooperative agreement funded under this FOA, the QIC will perform activities that complement the services of other CB-supported training and technical assistance providers, to include the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. The QIC will also partner closely with other CB-funded workforce development initiatives such as the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) and with the Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG), a national clearinghouse that connects child welfare and other professionals to resources, information, and online tools that cover a wide range of topics related to child welfare, child abuse and neglect, and adoption (<http://www.childwelfare.gov>). This project will advance federal priorities to improve safety, permanency, and

well-being outcomes for children and families by further enhancing the capacity of organizations to create and sustain a strong and stable child welfare workforce.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

CB intends to establish a QIC through a five-year cooperative grant to implement and test a comprehensive workforce framework in multiple child welfare agencies. The QIC will develop projects that systematically apply a workforce development framework and evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies/interventions to improve workforce outcomes for state and tribal systems, and assess how these affect child and family outcomes.

Project Goals

The QIC will build upon and incorporate the best learning from past and present research to:

- select or develop and apply a systematic framework and process for identifying, assessing, and evaluating child welfare workforce issues;
- create or identify appropriate evidence-based and evidence-informed workforce interventions;
- provide technical assistance, coaching, and other supports as a means to build agency capacity for implementing new workforce interventions;
- demonstrate new evidence for the efficacy of these interventions for improving agency workforce outcomes and workplace environment;
- identify and evaluate connections between improvements in workforce outcomes and improvements in social work practices that lead to improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes; and
- identify and report future workforce trends impacting child welfare and how agencies can effectively prepare for these trends.

The major components of the QIC include:

Site Selection

The QIC will develop criteria for selecting 5-10 diverse state and tribal child welfare sites that commit to testing, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies/interventions for identifying and addressing child welfare agency workforce issues.

Building Knowledge

The QIC will build on existing knowledge by creating a comprehensive information cross-walk document consisting of workforce development planning and assessment tools, the most commonly identified national child welfare workforce issues, and the most effective, evidence-informed/based workforce strategies for addressing those issues from the current workforce research. Identified workforce issues for the cross-walk document should incorporate issues named in state/tribal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) results and Child and Family Service Plans (CFSPs) and Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs). The QIC will build agency child welfare workforce knowledge by researching and collecting forthcoming child welfare workforce trends and identifying agency preparation strategies. Expanding new knowledge in child welfare workforce development must include but is not limited to these requirements.

Workforce Planning

Workforce development requires careful and deliberate planning. The QIC will develop or select a structured framework with supporting tools that can be used across child welfare systems to guide effective workforce planning and development strategies. The chosen framework should strengthen state/tribe capacity to assess areas of workforce strengths and needs, select effective workforce interventions, and evaluate results. The chosen framework should ‘fit’ with current Continuous Quality Control (CQI) processes.

Establishing Evidence-Based Practice Strategies and Interventions

The grantee will identify a battery of existing evidence informed/based workforce strategies and interventions for addressing common workforce issues. From this list or from the development of new evidence based strategies, the grantee and the child welfare agency will choose the appropriate intervention(s) to implement and evaluate as to their efficacy in addressing workforce issues and improving child welfare practices with children and families. Interventions for addressing similar workforce issues should be used consistently across sites to build evidence of usefulness and effectiveness.

Evaluation Requirements

The QIC will conduct a robust individual and cross-site evaluation guided by logic models developed collaboratively between the QIC and the projects sites to build a body of knowledge for comprehensive workforce planning and development and lay the groundwork for further development of evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies and intervention for addressing workforce issues.

The QIC is encouraged to use participatory and utilization-focused evaluation approaches to guide project assessment, planning, and implementation throughout the grant. The QIC’s evaluation is expected to provide regular, timely, and useful feedback to support successful implementation and intervention fidelity. The QIC’s evaluation is also expected to contribute to the developing knowledge base about successful processes and strategies for identifying workforce development needs, improving worker recruitment and retention rates and workplace environments, and sustaining promising practices to evidence-informed and evidence-based services for workforce development.

The QIC is required to rigorously evaluate the project activities.

The QIC will monitor the functional outcomes of workforce development changes. The QIC, in collaboration with its project sites and CB, may be required to produce a comprehensive evaluation report at the conclusion of the project period and present findings to CB and other stakeholders.

Throughout the 5-year grant period, the QIC will undertake and lead the following evaluation activities:

Phase I:

The QIC will develop preliminary logic models for child welfare workforce recruitment and retention (for components and across project sites), key research questions, methods to study key components (i.e. evaluation design), and instrumentation. The key interventions will be identified by the QIC. The QIC will work collaboratively with project sites to develop and refine project site-specific logic models, finalize evaluation questions, design, and

instrumentation, and pilot data collection procedures.

Phase II:

The QIC will collaborate with project sites to ensure data collection integrity, and to review, analyze, and interpret data. Throughout program implementation, the QIC will collaborate with project sites to review, analyze and interpret data, draft reports (including, as approved, journal articles) on findings, and actively disseminate findings from the evaluations.

By the end of the project and based on findings, the QIC will 1) develop and disseminate information on the elements to consider when identifying and addressing child welfare workforce issues; and 2) develop and disseminate a comprehensive catalogue of strategies and practices laying the groundwork for future evidence-informed and evidence-based intervention models, with supporting protocols, tools, and guidance for replication in child welfare agencies.

Project Outcomes

Both during and at the conclusion of the 5-year project, the QIC will answer evaluation questions for each project site, including, but not limited to, the following topical areas:

- Implementation and service delivery, including:
 - Output data for the different stages of the project (including quantity and frequency of activities and services performed);
 - Descriptive data about the interventions;
 - Descriptive data about the activities carried out to implement the interventions;
 - Data about the degree to which adoption and implementation (e.g., uptake, penetration, fidelity, etc.) of the interventions has occurred; and
 - Data about changes in readiness, capacity, infrastructure, and organization intended to support and sustain implementation;
- System Integration
- Sustainability
- Outcomes, including:
 - Data indicators measured in the CFSR (when appropriate and feasible, the evaluation should yield data that can be compared to, and contrasted with, regional, state and national level CFSR data, as appropriate); and
 - Outcomes related to the logic models, including those that focus on increasing the recruitment and retention of social work staff; and
- Cost estimate of the savings derived from implementing the interventions

Within these areas, CB is particularly interested in:

- Factors and strategies associated with successful implementation (facilitators), including contributing organizational and system conditions;
- Implementation barriers;
- Factors related to the appropriateness of fit between the selected practices and the systems and settings into which they are introduced;
- Degrees to which implementations spread and are maintained over time; and
- Sustainability of the new practices and services.

The successful project will produce the following outcomes:

- Publications documenting future child welfare workforce trends and strategies for preparation and a cross walk document of current workforce development information.
- Tested and evaluated promising practices and evidence-based and evidence-informed workforce planning and development strategies, tools, and interventions that can be successfully replicated in other child welfare agencies;
- Improved outcomes in agency recruitment, retention, and workplace environments within and across project sites;
- Improved safety, permanency, well-being social work practices for children and families involved in project site child welfare agencies; and
- Integration of the workforce development and planning model into the agency's strategic planning and CQI processes.

In summary, the QIC is expected to add to present knowledge about child welfare workforce development and demonstrate how an ongoing comprehensive systematic process for workforce development using evidence-based and evidence-informed practices leads to improved workforce outcomes and improved child welfare practices with children and families. Workforce issues to be addressed may include, but are not limited to, training, management, effective hiring practices and decision-making, worker retention, adequate and competent supervision, supportive mentoring, caseworker workload, cultural competence, worker safety, and supportive and professional organizational culture.

Planning Activities

Phase I: Planning Year

The QIC will be fully functioning as described in the grantee's timeline, within 90 days of the notification of the award. The grantee is required to attend a kick-off meeting with the Federal Project Officer in Washington, DC within the first 90 days following the notification of the award. The grantee will also be required to attend a meeting with the Federal Project Officer in Washington, DC during the project sites selection process in Phase I.

During Phase I of the planning process, the QIC will perform, at a minimum, the following functions:

- Develop publications for disseminating the results of the literature review and research on workforce development and future workforce trends in child welfare to lay the groundwork for building evidence of effective strategies for workforce planning and development.
- With CB, finalize the choice or creation of the workforce development planning tool, and the process for assessing and identifying workforce issues for each project site.
- Collaborate with CB in selecting project sites during the planning and implementation phases. Select the 5-10 state or tribal child welfare system project sites considering state, county and tribal system representation. Selected sites should vary in structure and geography.
- The QIC and each selected site will mutually implement these projects. The QIC will enter mutually binding work agreements with each project site. The proposed project sites and mutually binding work agreements must receive final approval from the CB

Federal Project Officer.

- Revisit the preliminary design for the subsequent grant years submitted in the QIC's original proposal and submit for CB approval a final design for "Phase II: Implementation Years" that presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the QIC would operate in Years 2-5. The Phase II Implementation Plan and the final site selections are due to the Project Officer 9 months after the award of the cooperative agreement for review and approval. The QIC must describe the approach and processes it will use to develop the Phase II Implementation Plan and address anticipated logistical and administrative challenges for the QIC. The final selections will include justification for each project site selected and address each site's respective anticipated logistical and administrative challenges. The Phase II Implementation Plan and final project site selections should be submitted to CB in a timely manner during Phase I and it is expected that the QIC will cooperate fully with securing CB approval of these before the start of Phase II.
- In all sites, the QIC will work intensively to identify barriers and make recommendations for needed changes in the state or tribal child welfare system policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that the innovations will work most effectively and contribute to developing promising practices, evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies and interventions for workforce development.

Phase II: Implementation (Years 2-5)

Year 2 through Year 5 of the cooperative agreement will include implementation, evaluation, and assurance of sustainability in each of the project sites. During this phase, the QIC will, at a minimum, implement the following functions:

- With CB, discuss the outcome of the state/tribal workforce planning assessment; the focus areas selected, the strategies and practices to be implemented, and the preliminary evaluation plan.
- With CB, discuss the choice of child welfare outcomes to be evaluated.
- Develop an Implementation Plan for each project site, to be approved by CB within 3 months of the beginning of Year 2.
- Present the design of an administrative and management structure for ensuring that projects are implemented and operating within 90 days of their selection by the QIC.
- Provide intensive, ongoing support, guidance, coaching, and technical assistance to sites in project implementation, data collection, and evaluation.
- Provide a description of mechanisms for forming and maintaining information-sharing and collaboration between project sites.
- Provide a methodology for conducting an evaluation within each project site as well as cross-site evaluation, including ensuring that projects collect appropriate qualitative and quantitative process and outcome data.
- Present strategies for integration and sustainability of the workforce development processes, practices and interventions into the agencies internal ongoing operations and processes.
- Design a comprehensive catalogue of workforce strategies and practices to lay the groundwork for further development of evidence-based and evidence-informed models of intervention for the workforce development, with supporting protocols, tools and

products that child welfare systems seeking to strengthen its workforce can look to for guidance, insight, and replication.

- Develop strategies for information dissemination to relevant stakeholders and the types of media vehicles that will be used.
- Will work collaboratively with project sites to review, analyze, and interpret data; to draft reports (including, as approved, journal articles) on findings; and to actively disseminate findings from the evaluations.

The QIC will build the capacity of child welfare agencies to continuously and strategically assess workforce development issues; build evidence for effective evidence-based and evidence-informed workforce development strategies; improve outcomes for children and families by improving workforce outcomes for agency staff; and fully integrate workforce development into the agencies' ongoing strategic planning and CQI processes.

Target Population

The QIC will build the capacity of 5-10 state/tribal child welfare agencies to systemically assess, plan, and implement strategies for workforce development.

Outreach and Engagement

The QIC must communicate clear and deliberate plans for outreach and engagement of state/tribal child welfare agencies selected to participate in the workforce development project. The QIC must engage its intended project sites in understanding and committing to the long-term, in-depth nature of the workforce project. The QIC will structure a mechanism for seeking ongoing feedback from each project site throughout the project period to anticipate potential barriers to success of the project, inform project activities, and support the agencies' ongoing implementation needs.

Collaboration

The QIC will actively collaborate with CB and other partners to achieve the purposes of this FOA. As a participant in a cooperative agreement, the grantee can expect to closely collaborate with CB in the review of its proposed activities. In some cases, CB and the grantee will revise and jointly develop key project strategies. CB must approve project plans and activities prior to implementation.

In addition to its partnership with CB, the grantee is responsible for collaborating with other federal projects, including but not limited to, NCWWI, the CWIG, the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative, and other CB-funded and federal interagency projects aimed at increasing the capacity of the workforce to meet the needs of children and families.

At the time of site selection there must be documented, and strong partnership(s) with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s).

Dissemination

The information and knowledge generated by these projects will be shared with the field and efforts will be made to integrate project knowledge into policy and practice. Grantees are expected to disseminate strategically and incorporate dissemination activities into their work. Dissemination activities will focus on key target audiences and effectively deliver

information to them. Project sites will disseminate their individual project products and findings and work with the other projects to disseminate cross-site products and findings. Project sites will also evaluate the extent to which their target audiences received project knowledge and used it as intended and assess the impact of dissemination. They will allocate sufficient staff time for dissemination.

The QIC and project sites are expected to work throughout the course of their projects with Federal Project Officers, CB training and technical assistance providers, to:

- Finalize dissemination goals and objectives;
- Identify and engage with target audiences for dissemination;
- Produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the program evaluation;
- Develop and disseminate summarized/synthesized information about the project;
- Produce a high quality comprehensive final report suitable for archiving in the CB Discretionary Grant Library (https://library.childwelfare.gov/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb_grants/GrantHome); and
- Ensure publications and websites are accessible (applicants are strongly encouraged to consider using Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794d) standards to ensure accessibility).

Demonstration Projects

Activities funded under this FOA are demonstration projects. A demonstration project is one that puts into place and tests innovative interventions or builds stronger evidence for promising interventions. Demonstration projects may:

- Test a theory, idea, or method that reflects a new and different way of thinking about service delivery.
- Implement and rigorously evaluate a promising intervention to build stronger evidence on key components and outcomes.
- Test whether a program or service that has proven successful in one location or setting can work in a different context.
- Address the needs of a very specific group of clients or focus on one service component available to all clients.
- Be broad and comprehensive in scope, or narrow and targeted to specific populations.

As appropriate to the intervention's developmental stage, demonstration projects will:

- Develop and implement an evidence-informed model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- Determine the effectiveness, costs, and benefits of the model and its components or strategies using a rigorous evaluation approach;
- Disseminate strategically and effectively collaborate with other projects in the grant cluster to establish goals, identify and engage with target audiences; produce detailed procedures, materials and other products based on the programs evaluations; and disseminate information about project activities, products and findings; and
- Contribute to the evidence base on strategies, practices, and programs that may be used

to guide replication, program improvements, systems change or testing in other settings.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	\$1,000,000
Expected Number of Awards:	1
Award Ceiling:	\$1,000,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	\$750,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$1,000,000 Per Budget Period
Anticipated Project Start Date:	09/30/2016

Length of Project Periods:

Length of Project Period: 60-month project with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Awards:

Awards made under this announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds.

Applications requesting an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period, or per project period, as stated in this section, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** See *Section III.2.* of this announcement for information on cost-sharing or matching requirements.

Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding federal assistance in which substantial federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of CB and the awardee prior to the award. CB anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes:

- CB review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation

- phases may begin (see *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Planning Activities*);
- CB review and approval of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements, training and technical assistance, publications or products, and evaluation) (see *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Project Outcomes*);
 - Close monitoring by CB of the requirements stated in this announcement that limit the awardee's discretion with respect to scope of services offered; (*see Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Outreach and Engagement*) and
 - Close monitoring by CB during performance that may, in order to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceed those federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities (see *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Collaboration*).

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Public or other nonprofit institutions of higher learning, as well as public or other nonprofit agencies and organizations engaged in research or child-welfare activities, are eligible to receive awards.

Institutions of higher education may receive awards provided they are not for-profit entities.

Collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts are acceptable, but applications should identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the grant.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity announcement. Faith-based organizations are encouraged to review the ACF Policy on Grants to Faith-Based Organizations at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/acf-policy-on-grants-to-faith-based-organizations>.

See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.

Please see *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for any limitations on the use of federal funds that could affect the eligibility of an applicant or project.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where "cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

III.3. Other

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period as stated in *Section II. Federal Award Information*, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "Request an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission" in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.

Missing the Application Deadlines (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the www.Grants.gov validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by, ACF.

Each time an application is submitted via www.Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which is transmitted to ACF, will be acknowledged.

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. Paper applications received after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Notification of Application Disqualification

Applications that are disqualified under these criteria are considered to be “non-responsive” and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this FOA.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161

Email: CB@grantreview.org

Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at www.Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package available in the FOA's Grants.gov synopsis at www.Grants.gov. They are also available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. See *Section IV.2.Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

Standard Forms that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d):

Available at the Grants.gov Forms Repository website at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>.

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) for assistance at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

In FY 2013 ACF implemented a new application upload requirement. Each applicant applying electronically via www.Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

AOR is the designated representative of the applicant/recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants. In signing a grant application, this individual agrees that the organization will assume the obligations imposed by applicable Federal statutes and regulations and other terms and conditions of the award, including any assurances, if a grant is awarded.

AOR authorization is part of the registration process at www.Grants.gov, where the AOR will create a short profile and obtain a username and password from the Grants.gov Credential Provider. AORs will only be authorized for the DUNS number registered in

the System for Awards Management (SAM).

Point of Contact

In addition to the AOR, a point of contact on matters involving the application must also be identified. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR. The point of contact must be available to answer any questions pertaining to the application.

Application Checklist

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

Accepted Font Style

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font.

Page Limitations

Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:". Page limitation(s) do not include SFs and OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have the last extra pages removed and the removed pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the table of contents, the one-page Project Summary/Abstract, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review. The removed page(s) will not be made available to reviewers.

In instances where formatting and font requirements are not adhered to, ACF uses a formula to determine the actual number of pages to be removed. The formula counts the number of characters an applicant uses when following the instructions and using 12-point TNR and compares the resulting number with that of the submitted application. For example, an applicant using TNR, 11-point font, with 1-inch margins all around, and single-spacing, would have an additional 26 lines, or 1500 characters, which is equal to 4/5 of an additional page. Extra pages resulting from this formula will be removed and

will not be reviewed. Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Copies Required

Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application package.

Applicants submitting applications in paper format must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures.

Signatures

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at www.Grants.gov.

The original of a paper format application must include original signatures of the authorized representatives.

Accepted Application Format

With the exception of the required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

If possible, applicants are encouraged to include page numbers for each page within the application.

ACF generally does not encourage submission of scanned documents as they tend to have reduced clarity and readability. If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Documents must be scanned page-for-page, meaning that applicants may not scan more than one page of a document onto a single page.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

The Project Description and the appendices must not exceed a combined total of 125 pages. The Project Description must include these items:

1. Table of Contents
2. Abstract
3. Objectives and Need for Assistance
4. Approach
5. Evaluation
6. Organizational Capacity
7. Logic Model
8. Line Item Budget and Budget Justification

The Appendices must include these items:

1. Certifications and Assurances
2. Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
3. Third-party agreements
4. Staff and Position Data (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
5. Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have requested and received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption.

Electronic applications will only be accepted via www.Grants.gov. ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.

Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.

File One: Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).

File Two: Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

Application Upload Requirements

ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are

listed earlier in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Professional software suite will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Professional they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Support” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility”, which is listed under the topic “Find Answers Online.” The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test application package. Grant.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions if an applicant is unable to open the test application package. There is also a help page for configuring Firefox and Chrome to open PDFs using Adobe software.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants that have received error messages while attempting to save an application package. It also addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or with SAM.gov, please refer to ACF’s “Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues” document for complete guidance at
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf under "How to Apply for a Grant/Submit an Application."

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, such as the SF-424 application and budget forms and the SF-P/PSL (Project/Performance Site Location), are uploaded separately at Grants.gov. These forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files. See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* for the listing of required Standard Forms, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov’s naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF’s systems, are listed in the instructions available in the Download Application Package at Grants.gov. Please also see

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Use only file formats supported by ACF

It is critical that applicants submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDF documents in order to comply with the two file upload limitation.** Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

ACF supports the following file formats:

- Adobe PDF – Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Corel WordPerfect (.wpd)
- Image Formats (.JPG, .GIF, .TIFF, or .BMP only)

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* later in this section under *Application Submission Options* for more information.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single FOA, or multiple applications under separate FOAs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled for the specific FOA it addresses by FOA title and by Funding Opportunity Number (FON).

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate sections of the application. Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially**

numbered.

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this FOA at www.Grants.gov.

Other versions of required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

		the award of a grant.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Submission is required for all applicants and recipients, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) all information related	Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR 75.113

to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award.

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

The Administration for Children and Families,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office of Grants Management,
ATTN: Grants Management Specialist,
330 C Street, SW.,
Switzer Building,
Corridor 3200,
Washington, DC
20201

And

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office of Inspector General,
ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures,
Intake Coordinator,
330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building,
Room 5527,
Washington, DC
20201

<p>DUNS Number (Unique Entity Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.</p>	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) is required of all applicants.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.</p>	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.</p> <p>See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.</p>
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Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applicants are submitting their application electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review and selection process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

Purpose

The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for available assistance. It should address the activity for which federal funds are being requested, and should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the program as described in *Section I. Program Description*. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. When appropriate, applicants should cite the evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific components of their project description. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

General Expectations and Instructions

Applicants should develop project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Extensive exhibits are not required.

Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting information concerning activities that will not be directly funded by the grant or information that does not directly pertain to an integral part of the grant-funded activity should be placed in an appendix.

General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

Introduction

Applicants must prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria in *Section V.I. Criteria*. The text options give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

Project Summary/Abstract

Provide a summary of the application's project description. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application. The abstract must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax)
- E-Mail Address
- Web Site Address, if applicable

The project abstract must be single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Objectives And Need For Assistance

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance including the nature and scope of the problem must be demonstrated, and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly and concisely stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as well as data describing the needs of the target population and the proposed service area as needed. When appropriate, a literature review should be used to support the objectives and needs described in this section.

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and/or community involvement in the project. Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals that will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

Applicants must clearly articulate how their proposed QIC will select sites, build knowledge, select a structured workforce planning framework to guide workforce planning and development strategies, establish evidence-based practice strategies and interventions, and conduct a robust individual and cross-site evaluation.

Applicants must clearly describe how their approach and evaluation plan are feasible based on the capacity, resources, collaborative infrastructure, and conditions of the systems in which the program strategies are to be delivered.

Applicants must provide a thorough explanation of how successful implementation of their proposed project would result in improved workforce outcomes for the child welfare staff in the target population in terms of recruitment, retention, workplace environment; and how these workforce improvements positively impact outcomes for children and families.

Applicants must propose a feasible method of enhancing child welfare agency capacity to improve processes and practices with an emphasis on improving worker and child and family outcomes.

Applicants must describe how their proposed QIC will successfully meet the target population requirements as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Target Population:* State/tribal child welfare agencies.

Applicants must describe their plans for outreach and engagement of state/tribal child welfare agencies selected to participate in the workforce development project as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Outreach and Engagement.*

Applicants must describe how their proposed QIC will successfully meet the collaboration requirements as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Collaboration:*

Applicants must describe how they will collaborate with CB and the NCWWI, the CWIG, the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative, and other CB-funded and federal interagency projects aimed at increasing the capacity of the workforce to meet the needs of children and families, among others. If the primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education at the time of site selection there must be documentation of a strong partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s).

Applicants must clearly articulate how their proposed QIC will successfully meet the dissemination requirements as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS,*

Dissemination. Applicants must describe how they will disseminate strategically and incorporate dissemination activities into their work. Dissemination activities must focus on key target audiences, for specific purposes and demonstrate an understanding of what these target audiences need to know, and how the applicant will effectively get the information to them.

Applicants must provide a thorough description of how the QIC proposes to accomplish the functions described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Planning Activities*. For each point noted in Phase I and Phase II applicants should provide a description of each task and activity to be implemented and exactly how they will be accomplished.

Applicants must provide a thorough description of how the research and publications documenting future child welfare workforce trends and strategies for preparation and a cross walk document of current workforce development information will be developed, as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Project Outcomes*.

Applicants must clearly articulate plans for the selection of the 5-10 project sites and the strategy for improving the outcomes for the target population in terms of worker recruitment, retention, workplace environment and integration of the workforce development process as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Project Goals, Site Selection*.

Applicants must clearly describe how their proposed interventions and integrated programs are culturally responsive and an appropriate fit for the characteristics and needs of the groups targeted for services as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Project Outcomes*.

Applicants must clearly articulate the level of effort necessary to consistently meet the goals, objectives, and evaluation-related requirements of this FOA. Applicants must demonstrate current and thorough knowledge of how state, county, or tribal child welfare systems operate and how to develop and implement successful best practice evidence-based service models that improve workforce outcomes as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Outreach and Engagement*.

Applicants must describe how the project is clearly innovative and would lead to increased knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Project Goals*. This includes the need for a systematic planning structure and ongoing processes for identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining employees to meet the needs of the organization while maintaining an organizational culture and climate that meets the needs of the employees.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function, or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. For example, each project task could be assigned to a row in the first column of a grid. Then, a unit of time could be assigned to each subsequent column, beginning with the first unit (i.e., week, month, quarter) of the project and ending with the last. Shading, arrows, or other markings could be used across the applicable grid boxes or cells, representing units of time, to indicate the

approximate duration and/or frequency of each task and its start and end dates within the project period.

When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Funded Activities Evaluation Plan

Applicants must describe the plan for rigorous evaluation of funded activities. The evaluation may be supported by a logic model. The evaluation must assess processes and progress towards the goals and objectives of the project, and whether the project is having the expected effects and impacts. The evaluation plan must specify expected outcomes and any research questions. The plan must discuss how the results of this evaluation will provide greater understanding and improvement of the funded activities. The plan must include a valid and reliable measurement plan and sound methodological design. Details regarding the proposed data collection activities, the participants, and data management, and analyses plans must be described. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles foreseen in implementation of the planned evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.

Applicants must describe how their proposed QIC will carry out the evaluation requirements as described in *Section I PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Evaluation Requirements*.

Applicants must present a rigorous evaluation plan that will contribute to developing the knowledge base about successful strategies for addressing child welfare workforce issues that have contributed significantly to the recruitment and retention issues for child welfare agencies. The applicant's evaluation plan must:

- Discuss how the evaluation will be conducted for both the proposed QIC and each of the project sites;
- Articulate the proposed rigorous evaluation methods, measurement, data collection, data management system, timeline for activities, plan for securing Institutional Review Board review, if applicable, and ongoing analysis for the QIC and each of the project sites;
- Describe how the evaluation plan would likely yield useful findings about effective strategies and contribute to and promote evidence-based and evidence-informed practices that could be used to guide replication in other settings;
- Identify the evaluator, cost of the evaluation, and the source of funds. If the applicant does not have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation, then the applicant will subcontract with an institution of higher education or a third-party evaluator specializing in social sciences research and evaluation to conduct the evaluation. In either case, it is important that the evaluators have the necessary independence from the project to assure objectivity. A skilled evaluator can help develop a logic model and assist in designing an evaluation strategy that is rigorous and appropriate given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Evidence of the evaluators qualifications to undertake the proposed work should be provided;

Geographic Location

Describe the precise location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a state taxing body, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.
- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of non-profit status in the *Appendices* file of the electronic application submission.

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a tool that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the linkages among program elements. While there are many versions of the logic model, they generally summarize the logical connections among the needs that are the focus of the project, project goals and objectives, the target population, project inputs (resources), the proposed activities/processes/outputs directed toward the target population, the expected short- and long-term outcomes the initiative is designed to achieve, and the evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which proposed processes and outcomes actually occur.

Organizational Capacity

Provide the following information on the applicant organization and, if applicable, on any cooperating partners:

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes (no more than two single-spaced pages in length);
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this

- announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively;
 - Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Dissemination Plan

Applicants must propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or grant project outputs so that project information is provided to key target audiences. Dissemination plans must include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds

Provide a plan describing how oversight of federal funds will be ensured and how grant activities and partner(s) will adhere to applicable federal and programmatic regulations. Applicants must identify staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities, staff, and partner(s). Applicants must describe procedures and policies used to oversee staff and/or partners/contractors.

Describe organizational records systems that relate financial data to performance data by identifying the source and application of federal funds so that they demonstrate effective control over and accountability for funds, compare outlays with budget amounts, and provide accounting records supported by source documentation.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C, according to the directions provided with the SFs. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If matching or cost sharing is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget

forms to use in this application.

Special Note: *The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, (Division E, Title VII, General Provisions – Government-Wide), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary, or any percentage of salary, to an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$185,100. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

Provide a budget using the 424A and/or 424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project. Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for the first year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

Allocate sufficient funds in the budget to support required travel: Within three months after the award, the project director, child welfare liaison (if different from the project director), evaluator and/or other key staff must attend a 2- to 3-day kick-off meeting in Washington, D.C.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. Both federal and non-federal resources (when required) shall be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which you are applying. "Non-federal resources" are all other non-ACF federal and non-federal resources. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, federal budget; next column(s), non-federal budget(s); and last column, total budget. The budget justification should be in a narrative form.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application. For each staff person provide: the title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent: annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Do not include the costs of consultants, personnel costs of delegate agencies, or of specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Contractors and consultants should not be placed under this category.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, retirement insurance, and taxes.

Travel

Description: Costs of out-of-state or overnight project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. Do not include in-state travel or consultant travel.

Justification: For each trip show the total number of traveler(s); travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/grantee orientations should be detailed in the budget.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year per unit and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the applicant organization's regular written accounting practices.)

Justification: For each type of equipment requested applicants must provide a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use of the equipment in the project; as well as a plan for the use, and/or disposal of, the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy, or section of its policy, that includes the equipment definition.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Contractual

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. This area is not for individual consultants.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients are required to use 45 CFR 75.328 procedures and must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed by 41 U.S.C. § 134, as amended by 2 CFR Part 200.88, and currently set at \$150,000. Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each contractor/sub-contractor, by agency title, along with the same supporting information referred to in these instructions. If the applicant plans to select the contractors/sub-contractors post-award and a detailed budget is not available at the time of application, the applicant must provide information on the nature of the work to be delegated, the estimated costs, and the process for selecting the delegate agency.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel; insurance; food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs (including audit charges); space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; training costs, such as tuition and stipends; staff development costs; and administrative costs.

Justification: Provide computations, a narrative description, and a justification for each cost under this category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

- 1) The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Note: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

- 2) Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, “any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect costs rate, ... may elect to charge

a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in § 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.”

Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent de minimis. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424.

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where “cost sharing” refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on match from a third party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards). **A recipient's failure to provide a statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.I.* of this announcement.

Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, expiration date is 01/31/2019. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

After a grant application package is submitted to www.Grants.gov, a confirmation screen will appear on the applicant's computer screen. This screen confirms that an application has been submitted an application to Grants.gov. This page also contains a tracking number to identify the status of the application submission in the Track My Application feature.

When the application has completed the Grants.gov submission process, Grants.gov will send email messages to advise the applicant of the progress of the application through its system. **Over the next two business days, an applicant should receive two emails from Grants.gov:**

- **Submission Receipt Email:** Confirms successful receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system and indicates the application's status as "Received."
- **Submission Validation –OR– Rejection with Errors Email:** Indicates that the application was either successfully validated or rejected by Grants.gov. Either the application has been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to

the grantor agency or the application has been rejected due to errors.

Application Validation at www.Grants.gov

After an application has been successfully submitted to www.Grants.gov, it still must pass a series of validation checks. After an application is submitted, Grants.gov generates a submission receipt via email and also sets the application status to "Received." This receipt verifies that the application has been successfully delivered to the Grants.gov system.

Next, Grants.gov verifies the submission is valid by ensuring it does not contain viruses, the opportunity is still open, and the applicant login and applicant DUNS number match. If the submission is valid, Grants.gov generates a submission validation receipt via email and sets the application status to "Validated."

If the application is not validated, the application status is set to "Rejected." The system sends a rejection email notification to the applicant and the applicant must re-submit the application package. See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Each time an application is re-submitted to www.Grants.gov, the applicant will receive a new **Submission Receipt Email**. Only applications with on-time date and time stamps in Submission Receipt Email, and that pass validation, will be transmitted to ACF. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check are not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged.

NOTE: The Grants.gov validation check can affect whether the application is accepted for review. If an application fails the Grants.gov validation check and is not resubmitted by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Similarly, if an applicant resubmits their application to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, and the resubmitted application does not pass the validation check, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Grants.gov Support Center

- If applicants encounter any technical difficulties in using www.Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Support Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at support@grants.gov, to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov Support Center is closed on federal holidays.
- Applicants should always retain Grants.gov Support Center service ticket number(s) as they may be needed for future reference.
- **Contact with the Grants.gov Support Center prior to the listed application due date and time does not ensure acceptance of an application. If difficulties are encountered, the Grants Management Officer listed in Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s) will determine whether the submission issues**

are due to Grants.gov system errors or user error.

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF recognizes that some applicants may have limited or no Internet access, and/or limited computer capacity, which may prohibit them from uploading large files at www.Grants.gov. To accommodate such applicants, ACF offers an exemption from required electronic submission. The exemption will allow applicants to submit hard copy, paper applications by hand-delivery, applicant courier, overnight/express mail couriers, or by other representatives of the applicant.

To receive an exemption from required electronic application submission, applicants must submit a written request to ACF that must state that the applicant qualifies for the exemption for one of the two following reasons:

- Lack of Internet access or Internet connection, or
- Limited computer capacity that prevents the uploading of large documents (files) at www.Grants.gov.

Applicants may request and receive the exemption from required electronic application submission by either:

- Submitting an email request to electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov, or
- Sending a written request to the Office of Grants Management Contact listed in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)* in this announcement.

Requests for exemption from required electronic application submission will be acknowledged with an approval or disapproval.

Requests that do not state one of the two listed reasons will not be approved.

An exemption is applicable to all applications submitted by the applicant organization during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) in which it is received. Applicants need only request an exemption once in a FFY. Applicants must request a new exemption from required electronic submission for any succeeding FFY.

Please Note: electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov **may only be used to request an exemption from required electronic submission.** All other inquiries must be directed to the appropriate agency contact listed in *Section VII.* of this announcement. Queries or requests submitted to this email address for any reason other than a request for an exemption from electronic application submission will not be acknowledged or answered.

All exemption requests must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Title,
- Funding Opportunity Number (FON),
- The listed Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number,
- Name of Applicant Organization and DUNS Number,
- AOR name and contact information,
- Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving the application (i.e., the Point of Contact), and
- The reason for which the applicant is requesting an exemption from electronic application submission. The request for exemption must state one of the following two reasons: 1) lack of Internet access or Internet connection; or 2) lack of computer capacity that prevents uploading large documents (files) to the Internet.

Exemption requests must be received by ACF no later than two weeks before the application due date, that is, 14 calendar days prior to the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. If the fourteenth calendar day falls on a weekend or federal holiday, the due date for receipt of an exemption request will move to the next federal business day that follows the weekend or federal holiday.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding section on "Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission."

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7.* of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 p.m, ET, on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this announcement.

IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants must have a DUNS Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov/SAM, <https://www.sam.gov>).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e. Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the “Help” tab at <https://www.sam.gov>.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency, or receive subawards directly from recipients of those grant funds to:

- Be registered in the SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV; and
- Provide its active DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV.

ACF is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, ACF:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Dates for Applications

Due Date for Applications: **06/13/2016**

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* section and in this section. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via www.Grants.gov is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via www.Grants.gov unless they received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by email or facsimile.

Instructions for electronic submission via www.Grants.gov are available at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period prior to the due date and time that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received at ACF. These applications will not be acknowledged.

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed, paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date. Mailed paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

Hand-delivered paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Hand-delivered paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:

- Applications submitted electronically via www.Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Emergency Extensions

ACF may extend an application due date when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time. Only events such as documented natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or a verifiable widespread disruption of electrical service, or mail service, will be considered. The determination to extend or waive the due date, and/or receipt time, requirements in an emergency situation rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)*.

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to www.Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov Tracking Number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time stamp**, which serves as the official record of application's submission. Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that it has passed the validation check.

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged by ACF.

See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will be sent additional email(s) from ACF acknowledging that the application has been retrieved from www.Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," or 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." No action is required of applicants under this announcement with regard to E.O. 12372.

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR §75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR §75.460)

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant award.

Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant award.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Submission By Mail

CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209

Hand Delivery

CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900

Arlington, VA 22209

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via <http://www.Grants.gov>.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: Reviewers will not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers will not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers will evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and **will not** refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. The corresponding point values indicate the relative importance placed on each review criterion. Points will be allocated based on the extent to which the application proposal addresses each of the criteria listed. Applicants should address these criteria in their application materials, particularly in the project description and budget justification, as they are the basis upon which competing applications will be judged during the objective review. The required elements of the project description and budget justification may be found in *Section IV.2* of this announcement.

Objectives and Need for Assistance

Maximum Points:20

In reviewing the objectives and need for assistance, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant demonstrates understanding of the goals and objectives of the FOA to address child welfare workforce development in a structured, systematic way using a planning framework to guide the implementation of evidence-based and evidence-informed workforce interventions.
2. The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of the need for agencies to develop and implement comprehensive workforce development strategies specified in this FOA to improve worker recruitment, worker retention, and child welfare outcomes.
3. The applicant presents a clear description of the proposed project, including a clear statement of the goals (i.e., the intended end products of an effective project) and objectives (i.e., measurable steps for reaching these goals) of the proposed project.
4. The applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of child welfare program requirements such as CQI, the CFSP, the APSR, and the CFSR and how they connect to child welfare workforce development.

5. The applicant defines how the QIC would add to the knowledge base of successful interventions for improving workforce outcomes for agencies.
6. The applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of the importance of child welfare workforce planning for the future.
7. The proposed project will support and coordinate with other relevant ongoing systems change initiatives.
8. The applicant defines how the QICs proposed project of workforce assessment and evaluation would be integrated into the project sites ongoing CQI practices.

Approach	Maximum Points:35
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In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The application provides a reasonable timeline for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates.
2. A well-defined logic model guides the proposed project. The logic model demonstrates strong links between proposed inputs and activities and intended short- and long-term outcomes.
3. The approach addresses each of the planning period and implementation period requirements listed in this FOA. There is a detailed description of the activities the program proposes to implement during the planning period and during the implementation period.
4. The proposed target population meets the requirements described in this FOA.
5. The proposed project will provide for the development and implementation of a comprehensive workforce development plan that impacts the target population for this FOA.
6. There is a convincing plan to engage the state, county or tribal child welfare agencies as key partners and ensure they take an active role in the project throughout the entire length of the project.
7. The workforce development plan is integrated with other key agency processes to facilitate sustainability.
8. The project would be culturally responsive to the target population.
9. The design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from the research and literature on known effective workforce practices and builds on current theory, research, evaluation data and best practices.
10. The project is innovative and would contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problems and issues addressed by this FOA.
11. The project is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.
12. The proposed project would develop into a model for other jurisdictions to look to in developing the ability to implement comprehensive, multi-faceted workforce development strategies as an ongoing part of agency functions.
13. The project would develop products and provide information on strategies used and the outcomes achieved that would support evidence-based improvements of practices in the field.
14. The intended audience (e.g., researchers, policymakers, practitioners) for product

dissemination is appropriate to the goals of the proposed project. The project's products would be useful to the identified audiences; the plan for disseminating information is appropriate; and the mechanisms and forums that would be used to convey the information and support replication by other interested agencies are appropriate and innovative.

Evaluation	Maximum Points:20
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In reviewing the evaluation plan, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant proposes a clear and convincing plan for evaluating the project and satisfies the requirements for the evaluation published in this FOA. The methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the project. The evaluation plan is strongly guided by the project's logic model.
2. The methods of evaluation include the use of strong measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the program as identified in the project logic model. The evaluation includes measures of outcomes, in addition to measures of inputs and outputs. The measures are objective and have strong reliability, validity, and internal consistency.
3. The proposed evaluation plan would measure the effects of the proposed implementation of the proposed project on safety, permanency, well-being and other outcomes of value to the child welfare field.
4. The applicant either demonstrates that it has the in-house capacity to conduct an objective and rigorous evaluation of the project or presents a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator. The proposed evaluator has sufficient experience with research and/or evaluation, understands the population of interest, and demonstrates the necessary independence from the project to assure objectivity.

Organizational Capacity	Maximum Points:20
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In reviewing the organizational capacity, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant's organization and any partnering organizations collectively have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of workforce development programs. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively.
2. The proposed project director and key project staff demonstrate sufficient relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities (e.g., resume) to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity. The role, responsibilities and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners, is clearly defined (e.g., job description) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.
3. There is a sound management plan for achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality. The

plan clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the lead agency. The plan clearly describes the effective management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants (if applicable).

Budget and Budget Justification	Maximum Points:5
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In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. There is a detailed narrative budget justification for the first year of the project. The costs of the proposed project are reasonable, in view of the activities to be conducted and expected results and benefits.
2. There is evidence that the applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this FOA.
3. The applicant has allocated sufficient funds in the budget to support required travel.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant or sub-recipient that does not have a DUNS number (www.dnb.com) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets any of the disqualification factors described in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Disqualified applications are considered to be “non-responsive” and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this FOA.

Objective Review and Results

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this announcement. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that

requested. ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of federal funds in its award decisions.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

As required by 2 CFR 200 of the Uniform Guidance, effective January 1, 2016, ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), <https://www.fapiis.gov/>, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000) over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR § 200.205 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1205&rgn=div8).

Please refer to *Section IV.2.* of this announcement for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval that were not funded under the competition because of the lack of available funds may be held over by ACF and reconsidered in a subsequent review cycle if a future competition under the program area is planned. These applications will be held over for a period of up to one year and will be re-competed for funding with all other competing applications in the next available review cycle. For those applications determined as approved but unfunded, notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Notice of Award (NoA) that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via postal mail, email, or by GrantSolutions.gov or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications

will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk and may be reimbursed only to the extent that they are considered allowable as approved pre-award costs. Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions*.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements>.

VI.3. Reporting

Recipients under this FOA will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2>.

For planning purposes, the frequency of required reporting for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Performance Progress Reports:	Semi-Annually
Financial Reports:	Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Rebecca Huffman

Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Children's Bureau

CB Operations Center, c/o LCG, Inc.

1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900

Arlington, VA 22209

Phone: (888) 203-6161

Email: CB@grantreview.org

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Administration
Office of Grants Management
CB Operations Center, c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) <http://www.hhs.gov/>.

HHS Grants Forecast <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/hsgsgrantsforecast/index.cfm>.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/>.

ACF Grants Homepage <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants>.

ACF Funding Opportunities <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/>.

ACF "How to Apply for a Grant" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-to-apply-for-grants>.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) <https://www.cfda.gov/>.

For submission of a paper format application, all required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms page through <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>.

Standard grant forms are available at the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Forms Repository webpage at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

For information regarding accessibility issues, visit the Grants.gov Accessibility Compliance Page at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

The *Federal Register* <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.
United States Code (U.S.C.) <http://uscode.house.gov/>.

Application Checklist

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" entry in the table in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications</i> .	Concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .

	<p>under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</p> <p>by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</p> <p>by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
Logic Model	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in</p>

	<p>Submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</p> <p>by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p><i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
<p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>These forms are required for applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL. 	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>

Proof of Non-Profit Status	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity.</i></p>	<p>Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is available in the electronic application kit at Grants.gov</p> <p>and at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>If applicable, submission of this form is required if any funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing, or</p>	<p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>

	<p>attempting to influence, an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.</p>	
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> of the announcement.</p>	<p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A or SF-424C. It must be submitted with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov page under the "Application Package" tab in the section entitled, "Mandatory." Available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.</p>

DUNS Number (Unique Entity Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.

Referenced in *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)* in the announcement.

To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

To register at SAM, go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.

Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.